Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)/Aero Club of India (ACI). Besides, DGCA has approved a total of 26 flying training institutes (including IGRUA) in the country for imparting Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) training.

(c) Recruitment, training etc. of cabin crew is done by the respective airlines as per their requirement.

Construction of airport in Sikkim

306. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any project for the construction of airport in Sikkim;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of steps taken so far by Government to provide air-services to and from Gangtok, Sikkim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Detailed project report has been prepared by Airports Authority of India (AAI) and submitted to State Government of Sikkim for construction of a Greenfield airport at Pakyong, 33 km South West of Gangtok. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 320 crores.

(c) Government have laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. Subject to these guidelines, airlines are free to provide air services to any place depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability.

According to these guidelines, all scheduled operators are required to deploy in the North Eastern region, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep (Category-II routes) at least 10% of their deployed capacity on trunk routes (Category-I routes). Further, at least 10% of the capacity thus required to be deployed on Category-II routes, is required to be deployed for connectivity exclusively within these regions.

Gangtok, Sikkim is being air-serviced from Bagdogra Airport (West Bengal) which is at a distance of about 125 km. Pawan Hans is providing daily helicopter services between Bagdogra and Gangtok.

Shortage of air traffic controllers

307. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is facing shortage of Air Traffic Controllers (ATC);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to bridge this gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Due to sudden and unprecedented growth of air traffic, there is a requirement of additional trained air traffic controllers to man the newly established ATC work stations to handle the increased growth.

(b) and (c) During the last two and half years, 371 Junior Executives (ATC) have been inducted in Airports Authority of India (AAI). Action for filling up another 148 posts of JE (ATC) is in progress. AAI is also utilizing the services of retired ATCOs, wherever possible. It has been programmed to recruit 100 ATCOs every six months for a period of two years to meet the additional requirement.

Modernisation of Mumbai airport

308. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has pointed out that there have been some slippages in time in the modernisation work of the Mumbai airport;

(b) whether this problem has been referred to the GoM because a wider consultation was required on the matter; and

(c) if so, by what time final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) An Operation, Management and Development Agreement (OMDA) has been signed between the private operator M/s. Mumbai International Airport Private Limited (MIAL) and Airports Authority of India (AAI). Clause (8) of OMDA clearly stipulates various development works that are to be carried out by Mumbai International Airport Limited for modernization and development of the airport in a time bound manner. There is a Committee headed by Secretary (Civil Aviation) in the Ministry which oversees the implementation of OMDA.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Strike by ground staff of Indian

309. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 13,000 ground staff of Indian went on flash strike on 11th June, 2007 causing disruption of air services and lot of inconveniences to passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the reasons for not settling the long pending issues of ground staff that led to strike; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure smooth operation of Indian and proper service to passengers?